

June 07, 2016

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT

A Public Safety Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, June 07, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in the Quorum Court Meeting Room, Benton County Administration Building, Third Floor, 215 East Central Avenue, Bentonville, Arkansas.

Committee Members Present: Jones, Shadlow, Allen, Adams, Anglin, Leadabrand, Moehring

Others Present: JPs Sheridan, *Sandlin, *Slinkard, Meyers, County Judge Bob Clinard, Assessor Linda Hambrick, Circuit Clerk Brenda DeShields, Circuit Judge Doug Schrantz, Circuit Judge Brad Karren, Circuit Judge Tom Scott, Prosecuting Attorney Nathan Smith, Comptroller Brenda Guenther, Administrator of General Services John Sudduth, JP-Elects Mike McKenzie, Mary Jane Comstock, Bob Bland, Joel Edwards, JP candidate Joshua Bryant, Perkowitz+Ruth Project Manager James Damron, Cromwell Project Architect Thomas Moore, Dewberry Lead Justice Designer Michael LeBoeuf, Gwen Gigous of Treanor Architects

Media: Tom Sissom – Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette

Public Safety Committee chair JP Jones called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

JP Jones announced an amendment to the agenda – a presentation on the jail expansion project by Gwen Gigous from Treanor Architects.

Public Comments

None.

Presentation: Treanor Architects Jail Expansion Project

County Judge Bob Clinard introduced Gwen Gigous from Treanor Architects. He stated that the scope of work for the design of the county jail expansion was to expand F-pod and H-pod and do the architectural design work in order to get that accomplished. He said that work is finished and it is under construction right now. The other part of the scope of their services was to consider a future, conceptual location for a potential expansion of the Benton County jail.

Gwen Gigous began her presentation by stating that they have been working with the County for eight-to-ten months now on the two jail additions. They have also been looking at a future expansion for a master-planning concept so that the County can plan accordingly going forward.

She stated that they have been working on two additions that are currently starting construction – one to F-pod and one to H-pod.

She stated that, for F-pod, they took out some spaces that were used as staff areas within the existing F-pod and put those into a new addition. They added approximately 42 beds in this space. They also created a more secure separation between the staff and inmate areas. Within the F-pod addition, they added more staff areas such as an exercise room, training room, locker rooms, and expanded jail administration offices.

For the H-pod addition, the female housing pod, she said that they are putting in six new cells within one of the existing dorm spaces, as well as adding a small dorm space for trustees. Overall, this addition gives them more beds, more flexibility, and more ability for classification of inmates. In addition to the two additions, she said they also determined where the next housing addition could go. They evaluated the site, and looked at all of the existing documents that they had on the jail. There actually was a spot on the original plan for the jail in the Northeast corner area that said “Future Expansion.” They determined that this is actually the best place for an expansion. Because they planned it originally, there are no utilities running through that area. It is also been left mainly open and would work with the existing site circulation. It could also easily connect into the interior circulation of the building and tie closely into the other inmate areas. She said that there are some out-buildings that have been built in that area that would have to be demolished prior to construction. A potential expansion could have anywhere between 140-160 beds, depending on need and the design configuration. It would not change the staffing model that the jail currently operates on. They also considered another expansion ten or twenty years from now. This would involve altering the existing drive and moving all of it to the North. From what they can tell, that is an existing railroad easement so the rights would need to be acquired for the existing land space. This could potentially be another 140-160 beds that would connect to the other additions. It is also not so remote that the existing kitchen and laundry facilities could not be used.

JP Jones stated that this is just a presentation and no action is needed from the committee.

Short discussion was held about the railroad easement and potential parking solutions for future expansion of the jail.

Presentation: Benton County Justice Facility Needs Assessment Study by Perkowitz+Ruth/Cromwell/Dewberry

JP Jones introduced James Damron from Perkowitz+Ruth, Thomas Moore from Cromwell, and Michael LeBoeuf from Dewberry. He stated that they are here to give a presentation on the needs assessment study for the justice facility that they were contracted to do. He said that this is just the needs assessment; it is not pictures of buildings and layouts. He said that they have some things that they are going to show but they are all conceptual. It is less definitive than studies they have seen in the past because those studies were taken further. He stated that, after the presentation, the discussion item to be considered will be moving forward with the next phase of the work which is site assessment and building design.

Michael LeBoeuf gave an executive summary of the needs assessment study. He outlined the two phases of the project as follows:

Phase 1: Programming Effort. He stated that this is the definition of the building. They do this by qualifying some of the previous studies that were done that did some space projections and caseload projections. He said that this is a look at what Benton County needs; it is a very nice baseline and it has engaged many people to make sure the correct amount of input is put into this effort.

Phase 2: Site Evaluations/Conceptual Studies. He stated that this is where they take the program and apply it to the various sites that the County decides to study. This applies the program in a way that tests the stacking of the building, the dispensation of the program, and allows them to get their arms around some numbers as it relates to each site. Once they get approval on the program document and a definition of what sites to study, they will move into concept development and pricing. They would like to have this phase done in about three months; this would allow them to put together a report by the end of the year.

He outlined the three major goals of Phase 1: 1) court needs, 2) security, and 3) service to the public. He said that these are the essential categories of the process that the building will be measured by.

He addressed the court needs first. He stated that, from the court's perspective, the single biggest thing is the consolidation of all the divisions into one building, excluding the juvenile courts which will remain at the jail site. It is creating a space that is functional, that meets the court's needs, allows for the correct number of judges in the future, as well as the staff to support the business operations of the courts. Finally, it is to build a building that satisfies a fifteen year window (with a target date of 2030), and to have that building set up so that it could be expanded over the life of the building to allow for an eighty-year lifespan.

He stated that security is at the heart of all courthouses. They want to ensure that there are proper circulation systems, that everyone inside the building can be properly screened, that there is proper set-back around the building, and that the areas where they bring inmates in and out of are protected.

He then discussed the level of public service. By co-locating all the divisions in the same building, there is an opportunity to have one-stop shopping, with the exception of the juvenile court. Most public only come to the building on occasion. Having them come to one single building with one entry with simple wayfinding is important, as well as being able to do that in a secure building with the correct amount of parking in and around the building.

He presented slides showing where their data was gathered from and contributors to the programming effort. He reported that they estimate the population of Benton County to be 344,523 by the year 2030. He then showed slides to the JPs outlining the existing courts facilities which consist of six divisions located in four separate buildings. He stated that there are five basic types of caseloads – probate, juvenile, domestic relations, civil, and criminal. He said that, once the courts are operating in a single building, the process can become more uniform and focus more on case types. Benton County currently has about 10,000 case filings per year and they estimate

this to be 18,800 by the year 2030. There are two reasons why caseload is important: it drives the need for courtroom space, and drives supporting staff, which determines the need for agency space. He then explained Courtroom Full-Time Equivalent (CFTE) which is a new model for doing court-set projections. This calculation determined a need of nine courtsets in 2030 for circuit court, with a projected increase of four courtsets every fifteen years. This would bring the projection to 25 courtsets by the year 2090. For the juvenile court, the projection is two courtsets in 2030 and four in 2090. He then discussed courthouse circulation and the building program summary in much more detail. The projected need for the building is 157,861 square feet in 2030 with an additional 41,645 square feet needed every fifteen years in the future.

Discussion was held about whether the Prosecuting Attorney's office would be located in the building. If the Prosecuting Attorney and the Public Defender were not located in the building, it could reduce the square footage needed for the base building to 116,545.

Prosecuting Attorney Nathan Smith stated that, if the courthouse were to stay downtown, he could stay in the historic courthouse just across the street. If the justice facility were to be located somewhere else, he would prefer to be in the same building as the courts.

Michael LeBoeuf briefly discussed ways the building could be expanded, and said that these details can be worked out in Phase 2. He then discussed the issue of parking. They recommended 300-350 spaces for basic parking needs, and he stated that this can be handled in a variety of ways.

Lengthy discussion was held about how to address parking.

A question and answer session followed the presentation. Topics discussed included how to incorporate technological advancements in the future, the timeframe of the project, how circuit court judgeships are created in the State of Arkansas, and if the projected number of judges is too high. The JPs then discussed if the project should be moved to another Public Safety Committee meeting or directly to the July 07, 2016 Finance Committee meeting. Discussion was also held about how and when to involve the City of Bentonville, particularly in regard to the parking issue.

*JPs Sandlin and Slinkard left the meeting.

JP Anglin made a motion to send the Phase 2 cost of \$119,500 to the July 07, 2016 Finance Committee meeting for consideration, seconded by JP Leadabrand.

Discussion was held about how this topic would be handled at the Finance Committee meeting and where it would move on to from there.

JP Anglin called the question, however, JP Adams was permitted to ask one more question.

JP Adams asked Judge Clinard if he would support the Quorum Court's decision if they chose only to approve funding for work on one site and it does not include the Highway 102 site.

JP Leadabrand called a point of order that the motion was to take this to the Finance Committee, and this question is outside the motion.

JP Adams said that this discussion is germane to the motion.

JP Jones allowed the question.

Judge Clinard stated that he will not approve a motion from the Quorum Court to only consider a downtown site. He stated that he would consider approving a downtown site if a site on Highway 102 is also included. If it is selected to only consider the downtown site and not include the Highway 102 site, he will not approve it. He stated that the site selection is immensely complicated because they require different designs; they must look at both sites. He reiterated that he would not move forward with a process that just includes a downtown site.

JP Jones called for the vote.

A show of hand vote which was recorded as follows:

4 in favor: Jones, Adams, Anglin, Leadabrand

3 against: Shadlow, Allen, Moehring

Motion passed to forward to the July 07, 2016 Finance Committee meeting.

Public Comments

Sue Keith Elverston of Pea Ridge spoke in favor of moving forward with Phase 2 of the project.

JP Jones declared the meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.